

Washington State Conservation Commission  
Drought Response Program  
Update for May 2005

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**Coordination:**

Mark, Stu, and Jon have been attending as many drought coordination meetings as our schedules will allow. Coordination efforts are ongoing with the Governor's office and the Departments of Agriculture and Ecology. Staff members are taking the opportunity to both comment on relevant conservation matters within these coordinated efforts as well as disseminate information to the appropriate districts as it becomes available.

**Funding:**

To date, the Commission has awarded \$38,066.63 in technical assistance money to seven conservation districts within the 16 drought critical basins. These districts were the same districts who applied for similar funding in the 2001 drought. The technical assistance money will allow these districts to work with private landowners to implement on-farm irrigation water management planning, to assist in water rights transfers, and disseminate drought response information.

The Commission has also entered into an interagency agreement with Walla Walla Community College's Irrigation Water Management Program to present 5 irrigation water management seminars, to be offered in strategic locations throughout the state. These seminars, which we had allotted \$15,000 for, will be hosted by the nearest conservation district for maximum effectiveness of the money spent.

Staff is also negotiating with Ecology's Water Resources Program to acquire pass through funding to help districts purchase soil moisture monitoring equipment to further enhance their water management efforts on the ground. Also a part of the request is funding for two new WSU "PAWS" weather stations to enhance the IWM efforts of two districts by filling a gap in data collection where no weather information is available. Certain variables of weather are responsible for causing evapotranspiration, or the amount of applied water lost to an area on a daily basis. This information is essential for responsible water application.

Staff has also entered into discussions with the WACD irrigation committee and Ecology over storage as potential mitigation for future droughts. No reportable progress has been made to date on this issue.